

Dec. 14, 2007

DWR Statement Regarding Wanger Decision

Judge Wanger's ruling to protect the threatened Delta smelt will curtail water deliveries by the State Water Project and federal Central Valley Project, again underscoring the fragility and unreliability of the Delta as California's water delivery hub.

"The Delta is indeed broken, both environmentally and as a source of water for most of California's people, businesses, industry and millions of acres of our most productive farmland," said DWR Director Lester Snow. "It is urgent that we respond to Governor Schwarzenegger's proposals to fix the Delta and our water delivery system, both for the sake of humans and fish and wildlife."

"Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed a comprehensive plan to ensure California has enough clean, safe water for our people, businesses, farms and environment," Snow said. "His plan calls for major investments in surface and groundwater storage, as well as urgently-needed improvements to protect the Delta's fragile ecosystem and ensure reliable water supplies. The need for the Governor's plan has never been greater."

Because of continuing dry weather as well as today's court decision, Californians will need to step up their water conservation efforts. In some communities water rationing will be necessary -- especially if the state experiences another dry winter.

Judge Wanger's ruling was made to protect the threatened Delta smelt from export pumping operations until new federal biological permits are obtained approximately a year from now. Future water deliveries out of the Delta will depend on conditions in those new federal permits.